AN IDEA OF HAPPINESS, IN A LETTER to a FRIEND: ENQUIRING Wherein the Greateſt Happineſs attainable by Man in this Life does conſiſt.

By *JOHN NORRIS*, Fellow of *All-Souls* Colledge in *Oxford*.

The Second Edition.

——— Sollicitis vitam conſumimus annis,
Torquemurque metu cæcaque cupidine rerum,
Æterniſque Senes curis dum quærimus ævum,
Perdimus, & nullo votorum fine beati,
Victuros agimus ſemper, nec vivimus unquam.
Manilius lib. 4.

LONDON,
Printed for *James Norris*, at the *Kings-Arms* without *Temple-Bar*. 1684.

Upon a Treatiſe called The Idea of Happineſs.

SOme Truths *there are of ſo* refin'd *a ſtrain,*
They all Commerce *with* vulgar *Souls diſ-*
And nobler *Spirits only entertain* ; (*dain,*
Who, while the Sordid Croud feed groſs beneath,
The Purer Element exalted *breath.*
To ſuch alone our Author *does prepare*
An Intellectual Treat *of* Heavenly *fare* ;
Rich Manna, *true* Elixir, *drawn with art*
More exquiſite than Hermes *could impart* ;
Subſtantial Happineſs, *Joys* uncreate,
Beyond the reach of Time, beyond the power of fate ;
Foretaſts *of Bliſs which in this life commence*
To the pure Intellect, abſtract *from ſenſe* ;
Such Extaſies *as raiſe the human Soul,*
In trance ineffable, *above the Starry Pole* ;
Uniting, Man by ways not underſtood,
To God, the univerſal Spring *of Good.*
Great Myſtery ! *which tho it ſoars above*
My groveling Reaſon, I adore *and* love.
Bleſt Union, which mankind advances *more*
Than by the Fall *it was* debas'd *before.*
Man was at firſt below *the* Angels *made,*
But now with higher *Glory is array'd.*

They

They for their Errours found no offer'd Grace,
For ever banish'd *from their Makers Face.*
But God himself in Human *Form descends,*
And man's Redemption *by his Death* commends.
By which vast Merit happy we *receive*
Both in *and* with *the Deity to Live.*
Who that his Dignity did truely know,
Would fix his fond desires on things below?
All the huge Boast *of Life is but a Dream*
Compar'd with even a thought *of* this *high Theme,*
The great Idea, *which so nobly Shines*
In the rich *habit of* thy wondrous *Lines.*
Farewell vain World, and all thy empty Pride,
With which it glitters *only till 'tis* try'd,
When the false Lustre vanishing away
The baseness *of the* Metal *does* betray.
For I, directed by thy light Divine,
To true and lasting Joys my Soul resign,
Which here on Earth begin in less degree,
And higher *run to all* Eternity.

London, Feb. 12. 1684. G. P.

To

To the admir'd (though to me unknown) Author, on his ingenious Treatiſe, The Idea of Happineſs.

SOme Ages *of the World had paſs'd, before*
Our Fathers found the uſe of Sail *and* Oar:
Embark'd ſecurely in a hollow Tree,
They rudely *ventur'd firſt to* Plough *the Sea.*
With Branches they ſuppli'd the uſe of Oar,
Their Rule *and* Compaſs *was the* adjacent *Shore.*
But ſtill Experience *taught them, and they grew*
Both Wiſer *every day, and* Bolder too.
And every Generation found out ſomething new.
At length by ſome Great Hero *was made known,*
To men, the Art *of* Navigation.
And now in foreign *Goods the Merchants trade,*
Iſlands *begin to be inhabited.*
But ſtill their Knowledge did contracted *lye*
In little *room, lame was their* Geography,
And to affirm Antipodes *was* Hereſie.
Till the Great Drake *reſolv'd the* weighty *doubt*
By compaſſing the ſpatious World about.
The mighty Drake, *who Regions did explore,*
Known only to One *greater* Traveller, *the Sun,*
(*before.*

So

So we had never ſeen the brighteſt ray
Of Truth Divine, *hadſt thou not ſhewn the way.*
Thou art our Drake, *Thou who alone didſt dare*
To move in an unknown, untrodden *Sphere,*
And, for leſs active *Mortals, didſt deſcry*
New *Worlds of moſt refin'd* Philoſophy.
So, by the Conduct of an Angel's *Hand,*
The Iſraelites poſſeſs'd the happy Land.
To thee, on Contemplation's Mount, *were ſhewn*
The Heavenly Glories, *on the* Face *they* ſhone,
And with thee thou haſt brought the inherent
(*Brightneſs down.*

In thy Idea *we* ingraven *ſee,*
In Characters *Divine,* Felicity.
Thou a new *Map of* Paradiſe *haſt drawn,*
And more exact *than er'e before was known.*
Which (*if there's ought that* Poets *may foretell*)
Shall laſt as long ('*tis drawn ſo rarely well*
As men believe *a Heaven, or* fear *a Hell.*

London, Feb. 7. 1684. W. R.

ON

Mr. *Norris*'s Idea of Happineſs.

I.

WHEN *our* inſpired *Writer, mounting on*
The Wings *of* tow'ring Contemplation,
Could not to our low Sphere *his flight confine,*
But with a Genius Divine,
Flew high, and Cut *the pure Ætherial* Line;
When all diſſolv'd in Extaſies,
He his Idea *fram'd of* Happineſs;
A *bright fac'd* Cherub *'twas that led the way,*
And clear'd his Eyes with a Cæleſtial Ray,
And that he might to men make known
His ſtrange Myſterious Revelation,
Inſpir'd his Soul with Guſts *and* Strains *Divine,*
Beyond what e're were given by the Sacred Nine,
With him he took his flight
Through the vaſt Orbs of Light,
Left all our gilded Toys,
Our Atmoſphere *of* dusky *Joys,*
No falſe diſguiſes could his Eyes betray
Nor gaudy Lures *his flight delay,*
Towards Heaven he made, and everlaſting Day.

II.

II.

The Seraphins *they guarded him along,*
And as he upwards did aſpire;
With Hallelujahs *rais'd his* Genius *higher,*
And with Cœleſtial Cadence *fill'd his Tongue.*
Till he at length paſs'd on,
Through many a Bliſsful Region,
To the bright Court *above,*
The Element *of* Love.
Where, with enlightned and inamour'd Eyes,
In Beatific extaſies,
He view'd the dazling Jaſper *mound*
That did the Empyrean *Seat ſurround,*
The great Metropolis *of Bliſs,*
And in its Anti-courts *did ſit,*
Enjoying all that could be fit,
For one not made Immortal yet.
Thus did his Soul from Heaven but one remove
Abſtracted by Seraphic Love,
From tyes Corporeal well nigh rent,
By powerfull Energys *of Thought intent*
Dwell fix'd in Contemplation *on the bright*
Ideas *of the God of Light.*
Till ſcorning ſenſual Objects, he could feaſt
On Praiſes, *and on* Anthems *make* Repaſt.
And did on this ſide Heaven with rays Divine
Of antedated and immortal Glory Shine.

III.

III.

Then, like a bright Columbus, *down the Skies*
He ſail'd, his Voyage told, and new *diſcoveries*
Of Iſlands Fortunate, *and* Coaſts *of Bliſs*
And Continents *of* everlaſting *Happineſs.*
And of them Charts and Maps he drew,
Fair, *like th' Original, and* True,
Caſting the Rumb's *by wch you are to Steer, (clear*
And how the Shelves to paſs, and how the Rocks to
Of Joys that true *and* good *appear.*
He tells how the Coaſt bears, *and how to* tack
Leſt we for Shoar *the* Clouds *miſtake,*
Leſt into gulphs *of* ſenſual *Joys we fall*
Purſuing Intellectual;
He ſhews the ſhortneſs of the formers date,
How few *they are, and how they* Circulate
Still to the Point *from whence they firſt begun,*
That nothing's good *nor* new *under the* Sun.

IV.

Then, as a Radient Cynoſure, *he leads*
By theſe his Lines of Light
And paths then Milky *way more bright,*
Souls more refin'd; Them he conducts and guides,
By many a Degree
Of the large Latitude *of Extaſie,*
In th' Ocean of perpetual delight

Through

Through Viſions, Raptures, Elevations high,
To the round *Haven of Eternity.*
Till by Calm Silence *all a round*
And ſtill tranquillity 'tis found
That an eternal Paradiſe *is* nigh.
And having made the Port
Where joys without allay reſort,
They take their larger *Portions with the Bleſt*
In Viſion, Love, *and* Joy, *and endleſs* Reſt.

London, March 25. 1684. S. P.

AN

An Idea of Happineſs, &c.

SIR,

THO you have been pleas'd to aſſign me the Task of an Angel, and in that Reſpect have warranted me to diſobey you; yet ſince, a conſiderable part of that experimental Knowledge which I have of Happineſs is owing to the Delight which I take in your vertuous and endearing Friendſhip, I think 'tis but reaſonable I ſhould endeavour to give you an *Idea* of that, whereof you have given me the *Poſſeſſion*.

You deſire to know of me wherein the greateſt Happineſs attainable by man in this Life does conſiſt. And here, tho I ſee my ſelf engaged in a work already too difficult for me, yet I find it neceſſary to enlarge it: For, ſince the greateſt Happineſs, or *Summum Bonum* of this Life is a *Species* of Happineſs in general, and ſince it is call'd (Greateſt) not becauſe abſolutely perfect and compleat; but inaſmuch as it comes neareſt to

that which indeed is ſo, it will be neceſſary firſt to ſtate the Notion of Happineſs in General, and then to define wherein that Happineſs does conſiſt which is perfect and compleat, before I can proceed to a Reſolution of your Queſtion.

By Happineſs, in the moſt general Senſe of the word, I underſtand nothing elſe but an Enjoyment of any Good. The leaſt Degree of Good has the ſame Proportion to the leaſt Degree of Happineſs as the greateſt has to the greateſt, and conſequently as many ways as a man enjoys any Good, ſo many ways he may be ſaid to be happy: neither will the Mixture of Evil make him forfeit his Right to this Title, unleſs it either *equals* the Good he enjoys, or *exceeds* it: And then indeed it does; but the Reaſon is, becauſe in ſtrictneſs of Speaking, upon the whole Account the man enjoys no Good at all: For if the Good and the Evil be equal-balanc'd, it muſt needs be indifferent to that man either to be or not to be, there being not the leaſt *Grain* of good to determine his Choice: So that he can no more be ſaid to be happy in that Condition, than he could before he was born. And much leſs, if the Evil exceeds the Good: For then he is not only not

not happy, but abſolutely and purely miſerable: For after an exact Commenſuration ſuppoſed between the Good and the Evil, all that remains over of the Evil is pure and ſimple Miſery; which is the Caſe of the Damn'd: And when 'tis once come to this (whatever ſome Mens *Metaphyſicks* may perſwade them) I am very well ſatisfied, that 'tis better not to be than to be. But now on the other ſide, if the Good does never ſo little out-weigh the Evil, that *Overplus* of Good is as pure and unallay'd in its Proportion, as if there were no ſuch Mixture at all; and conſequently the Poſſeſſion of it may properly be call'd Happineſs.

I know the Maſters of Moral Philoſophy do not treat of Happineſs in this Latitude; neither is it fit they ſhould: For their Buſineſs being to point out the ultimate End of Humane Actions, it would be an impertinent thing for them to give any other *Idea* of *Happineſs* than the higheſt: But however this does not hinder but that the General *Idea* of *Happineſs* may be extended farther, even to the Fruition of any Good whatſoever: Neither is there any reaſon to find Fault with the Latitude of this Notion, ſince we acknowledge Degrees even in Glory.

In this General *Idea* of *Happineſs* two things are contain'd. One is, ſome Good, either real or apparent, in the Fruition of which we are ſaid to be in ſome meaſure or other happy. The other is the very Fruition it ſelf. The firſt of theſe is uſually called *Objective Happineſs*, and the latter *Formal*. Some I know divide Happineſs into theſe as diſtinct *Species*; but I think not ſo artificially: For they are both but conſtituent Parts, which joyntly make up one and the ſame Happineſs: Neither of them are ſufficient alone, but they are both equally neceſſary. That the laſt of theſe is a neceſſary Ingredient, I think no doubt can reaſonably be made: For what would the greateſt Good imaginable ſignifie without Fruition? And that the former is likewiſe neceſſary is no leſs certain: For how can there be ſuch a thing as Fruition without an Object? I grant 'tis not at all neceſſary that the Object be a real ſubſtantial Good; if it appear ſo, 'tis ſufficient.

From this Diſtinction of *real* and *apparent* Good, ſome have taken occaſion to diſtinguiſh of Happineſs likewiſe into two ſorts, *real* and *imaginary*: But I believe, upon a more narrow Scrutiny into the matter, 'twill be

be found, that all Happineſs, according to its Proportion, is equally *real*; and that that which they term *Imaginary*, too well deſerves the Name, there being no ſuch thing in Nature: For let the Object of it be never ſo *Phantaſtick*, yet it muſt ſtill carry the Semblance and Appearance of Good (otherwiſe it can neither *move* the Appetite nor pleaſe it, and conſequently be neither an Object of *Deſire* nor of *Fruition*;) and if ſo, the Happineſs muſt needs be real, becauſe the Formality of the Object, tho 'twere never ſo true and real good, would notwithſtanding lie in the *Appearance*, not in the *Reality*: Whether it be real or no is purely accidental: For, ſince to be happy can be nothing elſe but to enjoy ſomething which I deſire, the Object of my Happineſs muſt needs be *enjoy'd* under the ſame Formality as 'tis *deſired*. Now ſince 'tis deſired only as apparently good, it muſt needs pleaſe me when obtained under the ſame Notion. So that it matters not to the Reality of my Happineſs, whether the Object of it be really good, or only apprehended ſo, ſince if it were never ſo *real*, it *pleaſes* only as *apparent*. The Fool has his Paradice as well as the Wiſe-man, and for the time is as happy in it; and a kind

Deluſion will make a Cloud as pleaſing as the Queen of *Heaven*. And therefore I think it impoſſible for a man to think himſelf happy, and (during that Perſwaſion) not really to be ſo. He enjoys the *Creature* of his own Fancy, worſhips the *Idol* of his Imagination, and the happieſt man upon Earth does no more: For let the Circumſtances of his Life be what they will, 'tis his Opinion only that muſt give the Reliſh. Without this, Heaven it ſelf would afford him no Content, nor the Viſion of God prove *Beatific*. 'Tis true, the man is ſeated at the *Spring-Head* of Happineſs, is ſurrounded with excellent Objects; but alas, it appears not ſo to him; he is not at all affected with his Condition, but, like *Adam*, lies faſt in a dead Sleep in the midſt of Paradice.

The Sum of this Argument is this; Good is in the ſame manner the Object of *Fruition*, as 'tis of Deſire; and that is not as *really* good in its own Nature, but as 'tis *judged* ſo by the Underſtanding: And conſequently, tho it be only apparent, it muſt needs be as effectual to *gratifie* the Appetite as it was at firſt to *excite* it during that Appearance. So long as it keeps on its Vizor and impoſes upon the Underſtanding, what is wanting in the

the thing, is made up by an *obliging* Impoſture, and *Ignorance* becomes here the Mother of *Happineſs* as well as of *Devotion:* But if the man will *dare* to be wiſe, and too curiouſly examine the ſuperficial Tinſel-Good, he undeceives himſelf to his own Coſt, and, like *Adam*, adventuring to eat of the Tree of *Knowledge*, ſees himſelf naked, and is aſhamed. And for this reaſon I think it impoſſible for any man to love to be flatter'd: 'Tis true, he may delight to hear himſelf commended by thoſe who indeed do flatter him; but the true reaſon of that is, becauſe he does not apprehend that to be Flattery which indeed is ſo; but when he once throughly knows it, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould be any longer delighted with it. I ſhall conclude this Point with this uſeful Reflection, That ſince every Man's Happineſs depends wholly upon his own Opinion, the Foundation upon which all envious Men proceed, muſt needs be either *falſe* or very *uncertain*. Falſe, if they think that outward Circumſtances and States of Life are all the Ingredients of Happineſs; but uncertain however: For ſince they meaſure the Happineſs of other Men by their own Opinion, 'tis mere Chance if they do not miſplace their Envy, unleſs they were ſure the other

Perſon was of the like Opinion with themſelves. And now what a vain irrational thing is it to diſquiet our ſelves into a diſlike of our own Condition, merely becauſe we miſtake another Man's?

Thus far of the Notion of Happineſs in General; I now proceed to conſider that Happineſs which is ὑγιὴς καὶ ὁλόκληρος (as *Plato* ſpeaks) ſound and entire, perfect and compleat. Concerning the general Notion of which, all men, I ſuppoſe, are as much agreed as they are in the *Idea* of a *Triangle*. That 'tis ſuch a State than which a better cannot be conceiv'd: In which there is no Evil you can fear, no Good which you deſire and have not; That which fully and conſtantly ſatisfies the Demand of every Appetite, and leaves no poſſibility for a deſire of Change; or to ſumm it up in that comprehenſive Expreſſion of the Poet,

Quod ſis eſſe velis, nihilque malis.

When you would always be what you are, and (as the Earl of *Roſcommond* very ſignificantly renders it) do *Rather* nothing. This I ſuppoſe is the utmoſt that can be ſaid or conceiv'd of it, and leſs than this will not be enough. And thus far we are all agreed. For I ſuppoſe, the many various Diſputes

maintained by Philoſophers concerning Happineſs, could not reſpect this general Notion of it, but only the particular *cauſes* or *means* whereby it might be acquired. And I find *Tully* concurring with me in the ſame Obſervation, *Ea eſt beata vita* (ſays he) *quærimus autem non quæ ſit, ſed unde.* The difficulty is not to frame a conception of a perfectly happy State in the general, but to define in particular wherein it conſiſts. *Lib. 3. de Fin.*

But before I undertake this Province, I think it might not be amiſs to remove one Prejudice, which, becauſe it has gain'd upon my ſelf ſometimes in my Melancholy Retirements, I am apt to think it may be incident to other men alſo. It is this, Whether after ſo many Deſputes about, ſo many reſtleſs endeavours after this ſtate of perfect Happineſs, there be any ſuch thing or no. Whether it be not a meer *Idea*, as imaginary as *Plato's Common-wealth*, as fictious as the Groves of *Elyſium*. I confeſs, this ſuſpicion has oftentimes *overcaſt* my mind with black thoughts, damp'd my Devotion, and as it were, clipp'd the Wings of my Aſpiring Soul. And I happened to fall into it upon a ſerious reflection on the nature of Fruition in the ſeveral Periods and Circumſtances of my Life. For

I obſerv'd according to my *Narrow* experience, that I never had in all my Life the ſame thoughts of any good in the very time of the enjoying it as I had before. I have known when I have promiſed my ſelf vaſt Satisfactions, and my imagination has preſented me at a diſtance with a fair *Landſcape* of Delights, yet when I drew nigh to graſp the alluring Happineſs, like the *Senſitive Plant* it contracted it ſelf at the *touch*, and *ſhrink'd* almoſt to nothing in the Fruition. And though after the Enjoyment is paſt, it ſeems great again upon *Reflection* as it did before in *Expectation*, yet ſhould a *Platonical Revolution* make the ſame Circumſtances recur, I ſhould not think ſo. I found 'twas ever with me as with the *Traveller*, to whom the Ground which is before him, and that which he has left *behind* him ſeems always more curiouſly embroider'd and delightſome, than that which he *ſtands* upon. So that my Happineſs, like the time wherein I *thought* to enjoy it, was always either *paſt* or to *come*, never *preſent*. Methought I could often ſay upon a *Recollection*, How happy *was* I at ſuch a time! Or when I was in *expectation*. How happy *ſhall* I be if I compaſs ſuch a deſign! But ſcarce ever, I *am* ſo. I was pretty well

pleas'd

pleas'd methought while I expected, while I hoped, till Fruition jogg'd me out of my pleasing slumber and I knew it was but a Dream. And this single Consideration has often made me even in the very pursuit after Happiness, and full career of my Passions, to stop short on this side of Fruition, and to choose rather with *Moses* upon Mount *Nebo* to entertain my fancy with a remote Prospect of the *Happy Land*, than to go in and Possess it, and then *Repine*. How then shall Man be happy, when setting aside all the Crosses of Fortune, he will complain even of *Success*, and *Fruition* it self shall *disappoint* him!

And this melancholy reflection bred in me a kind of Suspicion, that for all that I knew it might be so in *Heaven* too. That although at this distance I might frame to my self bright *Ideas* of that Region of Bliss; yet when I came to the Possession of it, I should not find that perfect Happiness there which I expected, but that it would be always to *come* as 'tis now, and that I should seek for Heaven even in Heaven it self. That I should not fully acquiesce in my condition there, but at length desire a Change. And that which confirm'd me the more in this *unhappy Scepticism*, was, because I consider'd that a great number of excellent Beings

who

who enjoyed the very *Quinteſſence* of Bliſs, who were as happy as God and Heaven could make them, grew ſoon uneaſy and weary of their State and *left their own Habitation*. Which argues that their Happineſs was not *perfect* and *compleat*, becauſe otherwiſe they would not have *deſired* a Change, ſince that very deſire is an Imperfection. And if Happineſs be not compleat in Heaven, ſure 'tis impoſſible to be found any where elſe.

Before therefore I proceed to define wherein perfect Happineſs does conſiſt, I think it neceſſary to endeavour the removal of this Scruple, which, like the flaming Sword, forbids *entrance* into *Paradice*. In order to which, I ſhall inquire into the *true Reaſon* why theſe Sublunary good things when enjoyed do *neither* anſwer our *expectations*, nor ſatisfy our *Appetites*. Now this muſt *proceed either* from the nature of Fruition it ſelf, or from the Imperfection of it, or from the Object of it, or from our ſelves. I confeſs, did this *defect* proceed from the *very nature* of Fruition (as is ſuppoſed in the Objection) 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be any ſuch thing as *perfect Happineſs*, ſince 'twould *faint* away while *enjoy'd*, and *expire* in our *embraces*. But that it cannot proceed thence, I have this

to

to offer, Becauſe Fruition being nothing elſe but an Application or Union of the Soul to ſome good or agreeable Object, it is impoſſible that ſhould *leſſen* the *good* enjoyed. *Indeed* it may leſſen our *eſtimation* of it, but that is becauſe we do not rightly conſider the nature of things, but promiſe our *ſelves* infinite Satisfactions in the *enjoyment* of finite Objects. We look upon things through a falſe Glaſs, which Magnifies the Object at a diſtance much beyond its juſt Dimenſions. We repreſent our *future enjoyments* to our ſelves in ſuch *favourable* and *partial Ideas* which abſtract from all the *inconveniencies* and allays which will really in the *Event* accompany them. And if we thus over-rate our *Felicities* before-hand, 'tis no wonder if they baulk our *Expectations* in the *Fruition*. But then it muſt be obſerved, that the *Fruition* does not *cauſe* this *Deficiency* in the Object, but only *diſcover* it. We have a better inſight into the Nature of things near at hand, than when we ſtood afar off, and conſequently diſcern thoſe *defects* and *imperfections*, which, like the qualities of an ill Miſtriſs, lay hid all the time of *Courtſhip*, and now begin to betray themſelves, when 'tis come to *enjoyment*. But this can never happen but where the Object is finite. An

infinite

infinite Object can never be over-valued and conſequently cannot fruſtrate our *Expectations*.

And as we are not to charge *Fruition* with our *diſappointments* but our ſelves (becauſe we are acceſſory to our own *deluſion* by taking falſe meaſures of things) ſo neither is the *Unſatisfactorineſs* of any condition to be imputed to the Nature of *Fruition* it ſelf, but either to the *imperfection* of it or to the finiteneſs of the Object. Let the Object be never ſo perfect, yet if the *Fruition* of it be in an imperfect meaſure there will ſtill be room for *Unſatisfactorineſs*, as it appears in our *enjoyment* of God in this Life. Neither can a *finite Object* fully ſatisfy us though we enjoy it never ſo thoroughly. For ſince to a full ſatisfaction and *acquieſcence* of Mind 'tis required that our Faculties be always *entertained* and we ever *enjoying* : it is impoſſible a *finite Object* ſhould afford this Satisfaction, becauſe all the good that is in it (being finite) is at length run over, and then the *enjoyment* is at an end, The flower is ſuck'd dry, and we neceſſarily deſire a Change. Whenever therefore our *enjoyment* proves unſatisfying, we may conclude, that either the Object is *finite*, or the *Fruition* imperfect. But then how came the *Angels* to be diſſatis-

fy'd

fy'd with their Condition in the Regions of *light* and *immortality*, when they drank freely of the *Fountain of Life* proceeding out of the Throne of God, with whom is fulneſs of Joy, and at whoſe Right hand are *Pleaſures for evermore.* Rev. 26. Here certainly there is no room either for the *finiteneſs* of the Object, or the *imperfection* of *Fruition.* And therefore their diſſatisfaction can be imputed to no other Cauſe, than the Nature of *Fruition* in general, which is to *leſſen* the good *enjoyed*, as was ſuppoſed in the *Objection.* This I confeſs preſſes hard, and indeed, I have but one way to *extricate* my ſelf from this difficulty, and that is by ſuppoſing a *State* of *Probation* in the *Angels.* That they did not immediately upon their *Creation* enjoy an *infinite Object*, or if they did, yet that 'twas in an *imperfect meaſure.* For ſhould it be granted that they were at firſt confirmed in Bliſs and *compleatly happy* both in *reſpect* of *Fruition* and *Object*, as we ſuppoſe they are now, I cannot *conceive* it poſſible they ſhould be diſſatisfy'd with their Condition. This being repugnant to the *Idea* of *Perfect Happineſs.*

Since then this diſſatisfaction muſt be derived either from the imperfection of the *Fruition*

tion, or the finiteneſs of the Object, and not from the Nature of Fruition in the general, to infer the poſſibility of perfect *Happineſs*, there needs no more to be ſuppoſed than the *exiſtence* of a Being full fraught with infinite inexhauſtable good, and that he is able to Communicate to the full. There may be then ſuch a thing as Perfect *Happineſs*. The poſſibility of which may alſo be further *proved* (tho not *explicated*) from thoſe boundleſs Deſires, that *immortal Thirſt* every man has after it by Nature: Concerning which I obſerve, that nothing does more conſtantly, more inſeparably cleave to our Minds than this Deſire of perfect and conſummated Happineſs: This, as *Plato* pathetically expreſſes it, is, τέρας τῶν πόνων τὸ κράλλιστον ὁ μέγας ἀγών, καὶ ἐλπὶς ἡ μεγάλη, the moſt excellent end of all our Endeavours, the great Prize, the great Hope. This is the Mark every Man ſhoots at, and tho we miſs our Aim never ſo often, yet we will not, cannot give over; but, like paſſionate Lovers, take *Reſolution* from a *Repulſe*. The reſt of our Paſſions are much at our own Diſpoſal; yield either to Reaſon or Time; we either Argue our ſelves out of them, or at leaſt out-live them. We are not always in Love with Pomp and Grandeur, nor always dazzled

dazzled with the glittering of Riches; and there is a Seaſon when Pleaſure it ſelf ſhall Court in vain: But the deſire of perfect Happineſs has no Intervals, no Viciſſitudes, it out-laſts the Motion of the Pulſe, and ſurvives the Ruins of the Grave. *Many Waters cannot quench it, neither can the Floods Drown it:* And now certainly God would never have planted ſuch an Ardent, ſuch an importunate Appetite in our Souls, and as it were *interwoven* it with our very Natures, had he not been able to ſatisfie it.

I come now to ſhew wherein this perfect Happineſs does conſiſt, concerning which, I affirm in the firſt place, that it is not to be found in any thing we can enjoy in this Life. The greateſt Fruition we have of God here, is imperfect, and conſequently unſatisfactory. And as for all other Objects they are finite, and conſequently, though never ſo fully enjoy'd, cannot afford us perfect Satisfaction. No; *Man knoweth not the price thereof: Neither is it to be found in the Land of the Living. The Depth ſaith, it is not in me, and the Sea ſaith, it is not in me.* Job 28. The Vanity of the Creature has been ſo copiouſly diſcourſed upon, both by Philoſophers and Divines, and is withall ſo obvi-

ous to every thinking man's *Experience*, that I need not here take an *Inventory* of the *Creation*, nor turn *Eccleſiaſtes* after *Solomon*. And beſides, I have already anticipated this Argument in what I have ſaid concerning *Fruition*. I ſhall only add one or two Remarks concerning the Objects of *Secular Happineſs*, which are not ſo commonly inſiſted upon, to what has been there ſaid. The firſt is this, that the Objects wherein Men generally ſeek for *Happineſs* here, are not only *finite* in their *Nature*, but alſo *few* in *number*. Indeed, could a Man's Life be ſo contrived, that he ſhould have a new *Pleaſure* ſtill ready at hand aſſoon as *he* was grown *weary* of the Old, and *every* day *enjoy a Virgin* Delight, he might then perhaps like Mr. *Hobbs* his Notion, and for a while think himſelf happy in this *continued Succeſſion of new Acquiſitions*. But alas, Nature does not treat us with this Variety. The compaſs of our *enjoyments* is much ſhorter than that of our Lives, and there is a *Periodical Circulation* of our *Pleaſures* as well as of our *Blood*.

——*Verſamur ibidem atque inſumus uſque,*
Nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas.

Lucretius.

The

The Enjoyments of our Lives run in a perpetual Round like the Months in the *Kalendar*, but with a quicker Revolution; we *dance* like *Fairies* in a *Circle*, and our whole Life is but a nauſeous *Tautology*: We riſe like the Sun, and run the ſame Courſe we did the day before, and to morrow is but the ſame over again: So that the greateſt Favourite of Fortune will have Reaſon often enough to cry out with him in *Seneca*, *Quoſque eadem?* But there is another Grievance which contributes to defeat our Endeavours after perfect Happineſs in the Enjoyments of this Life; Which is, that the Objects wherein we ſeek it, are not only *finite* and *few*; but that they commonly prove Occaſions of greater *Sorrow* to us than ever they afforded us *Content*. This may be made out ſeveral ways, as from the Labour of Getting, the Care of Keeping, the fear of Loſing, and the like Topicks, commonly inſiſted on by others; but I wave theſe, and fix upon another Account leſs blown upon, and I think more material than any of the reſt. It is this, that altho the Object loſes that great appearance in the *Fruition* which it had in the *expectation*, yet after it is gone it Reſumes it again. Now we, when we lament the loſs, do not take our meaſures

from that appearance which the Object had in the *Enjoyment* (as we ſhould do to make our ſorrow not exceed our *Happineſs*) but from that which it has in the *reflection*, and conſequently we muſt needs be more *miſerable* in the loſs then we were *happy* in the *enjoyment*.

From theſe and the like *Conſiderations*, I think it will evidently appear, that this perfect *Happineſs* is not to be found in any thing we can enjoy in this Life. Wherein then does it conſiſt? I anſwer poſitively, in the full and entire Fruition of God. He (as *Plato* ſpeaks) is κῶλον ἁπάντων τῶν ὀρεκτῶν τέλος, the Proper and Principal End of Man, the Center of our *Tendency*, the Ark of our *Reſt*. He is the Object which alone can ſatisfy the appetite of the moſt Capacious Soul, and ſtand the *Teſt* of Fruition to Eternity. And to enjoy him fully is perfect Felicity. This in general, is no more than what is deliver'd to us in Scripture, and was believ'd by many of the *Heathen Philoſophers*. But the manner of this Fruition requires a more particular *Conſideration*. Much is ſaid by the Schoolmen upon this Subject, whereof, in the firſt place, I ſhall give a ſhort and methodical account, and then fix upon the Opinion which I beſt approve of. The firſt thing that I obſerve,

ſerve, is, that 'tis generally agreed upon among them, that this Fruition of God conſiſts in ſome *Operation*; and I think with very good Reaſon. For as by the *Objective* part of *perfect Happineſs* we underſtand that which is beſt and laſt, and to which all other things are to be referr'd; So by the *Formal* part of it muſt be underſtood the beſt and laſt Habitude of Man toward that beſt Object, ſo that the *Happineſs* may both ways ſatisfy the Appetite, that is, as 'tis the beſt thing, and as 'tis the Poſſeſſion, Uſe, or Fruition of that beſt thing: Now this habitude whereby the beſt thing is perfectly poſſeſs'd, muſt needs be ſome *Operation*, becauſe *Operation* is the ultimate perfection of every Being. Which *Axiom* (as *Cajetan* well obſerves) muſt not be ſo underſtood as if Operation taken by it ſelf were more perfect than the thing which tends to it, but that every thing with its Operation is more perfect than without it.

The next thing which I obſerve, is, that 'tis alſo farther agreed upon among them, that this Operation wherein our Fruition of God does conſiſt, is an Operation of the *Intellectual* part, and not of the *Senſitive*. And this alſo I take to be very reaſonable. Firſt, becauſe 'tis generally receiv'd, that the Eſſence of God cannot be the Object of any of our

Senſes. But Secondly, Suppoſe it could, yet ſince this Operation wherein our *perfect Happineſs* does conſiſt muſt be the perfecteſt Operation, and ſince that of the *Intellectual* part is more perfect than that of the *Senſitive*, it follows that the Operation whereby we enjoy God muſt be that of the *Intellectual* part only.

But now whereas the *Intellectual* part of man (as 'tis oppoſed to the *Senſitive*) is double, *viz.* That of the *Underſtanding*, and that of the *Will*, there has commenced a great Controverſy between the *Thomiſts* and the *Scotiſts*, in which Act or Operation of the *Rational Soul* the *Fruition* of God does conſiſt, whether in an Act of the *Underſtanding*, or in an Act of the *Will*. The *Thomiſts* will have it conſiſt purely in an Act of the *Underſtanding*, which is *Viſion*. The *Scotiſts* in Act of the *Will*, which is *Love*. I intend not here to launch out into thoſe *Voluminous Intricacies* and *Abſtruſities*, occaſioned by the management of this Argument: It may ſuffice to tell you, that I think they are both in the extream, and therefore I ſhall take the middle way and reſolve the perfect Fruition of God partly into *Viſion* and partly into *Love*. Theſe are the two arms with which we embrace the Divinity, and unite our Souls to the *fair* one and

and the *good*. These I conceive are both so *essential* to the *perfect Fruition* of God, that the *Idea* of it can by no means be maintained if either of them be wanting. For, *since* God is both Supream *Truth* and infinite *Goodness*, he cannot be intirely possess'd but by the most clear *knowledge* and the most ardent *love*. And besides, since the Soul is happy by her Faculties, her Happiness must consist in the most perfect Operation of each Faculty. For if Happiness did consist formally in the sole Operation of the *Understanding* (as most say) or in the sole Operation of the *Will* (as others) the Man would not be compleatly and in all respects Happy. For how is it possible a Man should be perfectly Happy in loving the greatest good if he did not know it, or in knowing it if he did not love it? And moreover, these two Operations do so mutually tend to the promotion and conservation of one another, that upon this depends the perpetuity and the constancy of our Happiness. For while the Blessed do πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον, Face to Face contemplate the Supream Truth and the infinite Goodness, they cannot chuse but love perpetually; and while they perpetually love, they cannot chuse but perpetualy contemplate. And in this mutual re-

ciprocation of the Actions of the Soul consists the *perpetuity* of Heaven, the *Circle* of Felicity.

Besides this way of resolving our *fruition* of God into *Vision* and *Love*, there is a Famous Opinion said to be *broacht* by *Henricus Gandavensis*, who, upon a Supposition that God could not be so fully enjoy'd as is required to perfect Happiness, only by the *Operations* or *Powers* of the Soul, fancied a certain *Illapse* whereby the *Divine Essence* did fall in with, and as it were penetrate the *Essence* of the Blessed. Which Opinion he endeavours to illustrate by this Similitude. That as a piece of Iron, red hot by reason of the *Illapse* of the fire into it, appears all over like fire, so the Souls of the Blessed by this *Illapse* of the *Divine Essence* into them, shall be all over *Divine*.

I think he has scarce any *followers* in this Opinion, but I am sure he had a *leader*. For this is no more than what *Plato* taught before him, as is to be seen in his Discourses about the *refusion* of the Souls of good men into the *Anima Mundi*, which is the self-same in other terms with this Opinion. And the Truth of what I affirm may farther appear from an expression of that great *Platonist Plotinus*, (viz.) that

the

the Soul will then be Happy when it shall depart hence to God, and as another and no longer her self shall become wholely his, ἑαυτὴν ἀυτῷ ὥσπερ κέντρῳ κέντρον συνάψας, *having joyn'd her self to him as a Center to a Center.* Enn. 6. lib. 9. cap. 10.

That such an intimate *Conjunction* with God as is here described is possible, seems to me more than credible from the Nature of the *Hypostatic* Union, but whether our *Fruition* of God after this Life shall consist in it, none know but those happy Souls who enjoy him, and therefore I shall determine nothing before the time. This only I observe, that should our *Fruition* of God consist in such an Union or rather *Penetration* of *Essences*, that would not exclude but rather infer those Operations of *Vision* and *Love* as necessary to *Fruition*; but on the other hand, there seems no such necessity of this Union to the *Fruition*, but that it may be conceiv'd intire without it. And therefore why we should multiply difficulties without cause, I see no reason. For my part I should think my self sufficiently happy in the clear Vision of my Maker, nor should I desire any thing beyond the Prayer of *Moses*, *I beseech thee shew me thy Glory.* *Exod.* 33. 18.

For

For what an infinite Satisfaction, Happineſs, and Delight muſt it needs be to have a clear and intimate perception of that Primitive and Original Beauty, Perfection and Harmony, whereof all that appears fair and excellent either to our *Senſes* or *Underſtandings* in this Life is but a faint imitation, a pale Reflection! To ſee him who is the Fountain of all Being, containing in himſelf the perfection, not only of all that is, but of all that is poſſible to be, *the* Alpha *and* Omega, *the beginning and the ending, the firſt and the laſt, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty!* To ſee him of whom all Nature is the *Image*, of whom all the Harmony both of the viſible and inviſible World is but the *Eccho!* To ſee him, who (as *Plato* divinely and magnificently expreſſes it) is πολὺ πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὑτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν. The immenſe Ocean of Beauty, which is it ſelf by it ſelf, with it ſelf, uniform, alwayes exiſting! This certainly will affect the Soul with all the pleaſing and raviſhing Tranſports of Love and Deſire, Joy and Delight, Wonder and Amazement, together with a ſettled Acquieſcence and Complacency of Spirit only leſs infinite than the *Lovelineſs* that cauſes it, and the peculiar Complacency of him Rev. 1. 8.

him who rejoyces in his own fulneſs, and the *Comprehenſions* of Eternity. We ſee how ſtrangely our Senſe of *Seeing* is affected with the Harmony of *Colours*, and our ſence of Hearing with the Harmony of Sounds, inſomuch that ſome have been too *weak* for the *enjoyment*, and have grown mad with the *Sublimate* of Pleaſure. And if ſo, what then ſhall we think of the *Beatific Viſion*, the pleaſure of which will ſo far tranſcend that of the other, as God who is all over Harmony and Proportion exceeds the ſweeteſt Melody of Sounds and Colours, and the perception of the Mind is more vigorous, quick and piercing than that of the Senſes? This is *perfect Happineſs*, this is the Tree of Life which grows in the *midſt* of the *Paradiſe* of God, this is Heaven, which while the Learned diſpute about, the Good only enjoy. But I ſhall not venture to Soar any longer in theſe Heights, I find the *Æther* too thin here to breath in long, and the Brightneſs of the Region flaſhes too ſtrong upon my tender Senſe; I ſhall therefore haſten to deſcend from the Mount of God, leſt I grow *giddy* with ſpeculation, and loſe thoſe Secrets which I have learnt there, the *Cabala* of Felicity.

And now, (Sir) I come to conſider your Queſtion (*viz.*) Wherein the greateſt Happineſs attainable by Man in this Life does conſiſt. Concerning which, there is as great variety of Opinions among *Philoſophers*, as there is among *Geographers* about the Seat of *Paradiſe*. The Learned *Varro* reckons up no leſs than 288 ſeveral Opinions about it, and yet notwithſtanding the number of Writers who have *bequeath'd* Volumes upon this Subject to Poſterity, they ſeem to have been in the dark in nothing more than in this, and (excepting only a few *Platoniſts*, who placed Man's greateſt End in the Contemplation of Truth) they ſeem to have undertaken nothing ſo *unhappily*, as when they eſſay'd to write of *Happineſs*. Some meaſure their *Happineſs* by the high-tide of their Riches, as the *Egyptians* did the Fertility of the Year by the increaſe of the River *Nile*. Others place it in the Pleaſures of Sence, others in Honour and Greatneſs. But theſe and the like were Men of the common Herd, low groveling Souls, that either *underſtood* not the *Dignity* of Humane Nature, or elſe *forgot* that they were Men. But there were others of a *Diviner Genius and Sublimer Spirit*,

Queis meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan.

Who

Who had a more generous blood running in their Veins, which made them put a juſt value upon themſelves, and ſcorn to place their greateſt *Happineſs* in that which they ſhould bluſh to enjoy. And thoſe were the *Stoics* and the *Peripatetics*, who both place the greateſt *Happineſs* of this Life in the Actions of Vertue, with this only difference, that whereas the former are contented with *Naked Vertue*, the latter require ſome other *Collateral* things to the farther *accompliſhment* of *Happineſs*, ſuch as are Health and Strength of Body, a Competent Lively-hood, and the like.

And this Opinion has been ſubſcribed to by the hands of eminent *Moraliſts* in all Ages. And as it is Venerable for its Antiquity, ſo has it gain'd no ſmall Authority from the Pen of a great Modern Writer (*Deſcartes*) who reſolves the greateſt *Happineſs* of this Life into the right uſe of the *Will*, which conſiſts in this, that a Man have a firm and conſtant purpoſe always to do that which he ſhall judge to be beſt.

I confeſs, the Practice of Vertue is a very great inſtrument of *Happineſs*, and that there is a great deal more true ſatisfaction and ſolid content to be found in a conſtant courſe of well living, than in all the ſoft Careſſes of the

the moſt *ſtudied* Luxury, or the Voluptuouſneſs of a *Seraglio*. And therefore I have oftentimes been exceedingly pleaſed in the reading of a certain Paſſage in that Divine Moraliſt *Hierocles*, where he tells you, that the Vertuous Man lives much more pleaſantly than the Vicious Man. *For* (ſays he) *all Pleaſure is the Companion of Action, it has no Subſiſtence of its own, but accompanies us in our doing ſuch and ſuch things. Hence 'tis that the worſer Actions are accompanied with the meaner Pleaſures. So that the good Man does not only excell the wicked Man in what is good, but has alſo the advantage of him even in Pleaſure, for whoſe ſake alone he is wicked. For he that chuſes Pleaſure with Filthineſs, altho for a while he be ſweetly and deliciouſly entertain'd, yet at laſt through the Filthineſs annexed to his Enjoyment, he is brought to a painful Repentance. But now he that prefers Vertue with all her Labours and Difficulties, though at firſt for want of uſe it ſits heavy upon him, yet by the Conjunction of good he alleviates the Labour, and at laſt enjoys pure and unallay'd Pleaſure with his Vertue. So that of neceſſity that Life is moſt unhappy, which is moſt wicked, and that moſt pleaſant which is moſt vertuous.*

Now

Now this I readily ſubmit to as a great truth, that the degrees of *Happineſs* vary according to the degrees of *Vertue*, and conſequently that that Life which is moſt *Vertuous* is moſt *Happy*, with reference to thoſe that are Vicious or leſs Vertuous, every degree of Vertue having a proportionate degree of *Happineſs* accompanying it, (which is all, I ſuppoſe, that excellent Author intends.) But I do not think the moſt *Vertuous* Life *ſo* the moſt *Happy*, but that it may become Happier, unleſs ſomething more be comprehended in the Word (Vertue) then the *Stoics*, *Peripatetics*, and the generality of other Moraliſts underſtand by it. For with them it ſignifies no more but only ſuch a firm ἕξις or habitude of the Will to good, whereby we are conſtantly diſpoſed, notwithſtanding the contrary tendency of our Paſſions, to perform the neceſſary Offices of Life. This they call *Moral* or *Civil* Vertue, and although this brings always *Happineſs* enough with it to make ample amends for all the difficulties which attend the practiſe of it: Yet I am not of Opinion that the greateſt Happineſs attainable by Man in this Life conſiſts in it. But there is another and a higher Senſe of the Word, which frequently occurs in the *Pythagorean*

and

and *Platonic* Writings, (*viz.*) *Contemplation* and the *Unitive* way of Religion. And this they call *Divine Vertue.* I allow of the diſtinction, but I would not be thought to derive it from the *Principle*, as if Moral Vertue were *acquired*, and this *infuſed* (for to ſpeak ingeniouſly, infuſed Vertue ſeem'd ever to me as great a *Paradox* in *Divinity*, as Occult qualities in *Philoſophy*) but from the nobleneſs of the Object, the Object of the former being Moral good, and the Object of the latter God himſelf. The former is a State of *Proficiency*, the latter of *Perfection.* The former is a State of difficulty and contention, the latter of eaſe and ſerenity. The former is employ'd in maſtering the Paſſions, and regulating the actions of common Life, the latter in Divine Meditation and the Extaſies of *Seraphic* Love. He that has only the former, is like *Moſes* with much difficulty climbing up to the Holy Mount, but he that has the latter, is like the ſame Perſon converſing with God on the ſerene top of it, and ſhining with the Rays of *anticipated* Glory. So that this latter ſuppoſes the acquiſition of the former, and conſequently has all the *Happineſs* retaining to the other, beſides what it adds of its own. This is the laſt *Stage* of

Humane

Humane Perfection, the utmoſt *round* of the Ladder whereby we aſcend to *Heaven*, one *Step* higher is Glory. Here then will I build my *Tabernacle*, for *it is good to be here.* Here will I ſet up my Pillar of Reſt, here will I fix, for why ſhould I travel on farther in purſuit of any greater *Happineſs*, ſince Man in this Station is but a *little lower than the Angels*, one *remove* from *Heaven.* Here certainly is the greateſt happineſs, as well as Perfection attainable by Man in this State of imperfection. For ſince that Happineſs which is abſolutely perfect and compleat conſiſts in the clear and intimate *Viſion* and moſt ardent *Love* of God, hence we ought to take our Meaſures, and conclude that to be the greateſt Happineſs attainable in this State, which is the greateſt participation of the other. And that can be nothing elſe but the *Unitive* way of Religion, which conſiſts of the *Contemplation* and *Love* of God. I ſhall ſay ſomething of each of theſe ſeverally, and ſomething of the *Unitive* way of Religion, which is the reſult of both, and ſo ſhut up this Diſcourſe.

By *Contemplation* in general (θεωρία) we underſtand an application of the *Underſtanding* to ſome truth. But here in this place we take the word in a more peculiar ſence, as it

ſignifies an habitual, attentive, ſteddy application or converſion of the Spirit to God and his Divine Perfections. Of this the Maſters of *Myſtic Theology* commonly make fifteen Degrees. The firſt is Intuition of Truth, the ſecond is a Retirement of all the Vigour and Strength of the Faculties into the innermoſt parts of the Soul, the third is Spiritual Silence, the fourth is Reſt, the fifth is Union, the ſixth is the Hearing of the ſtill Voice of God, the ſeventh is Spiritual Slumber, the eighth is Ecſtacy, the ninth is Rapture, the tenth is the Corporeal Appearance of Chriſt and the Saints, the eleventh is the Imaginary Appearance of the Same, the twelfth is the Intellectual Viſion of God, the thirteenth is the Viſion of God in Obſcurity, the fourteenth is an admirable Manifeſtation of God, the fifteenth is a clear and intuitive Viſion of him, ſuch as St. *Auſtin* and *Tho. Aquinas* attribute to St. *Paul*, when he was rapt up into the third Heaven. Others of them reckon ſeven degrees only, (*viz.*) Taſte, Deſire, Satiety, Ebriety, Security, Tranquility, but the name of the ſeventh (they ſay) is known only to God.

I ſhall not ſtand to examine the *Scale* of this Diviſion, perhaps there may be a kind of

of a *Pythagoric* Superſtition in the number. But this I think I may affirm in general, that the Soul may be *wound* up to a moſt ſtrange degree of *Abſtraction* by a ſilent and ſteddy *Contemplation* of God. *Plato* defines *Contemplation* to be λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, a Solution and a Separation of the Soul from the Body. And ſome of the ſeverer *Platoniſts* have been of Opinion, that 'tis poſſible for a Man by mere *intention* of thought not only to withdraw the Soul from all commerce with the Senſes, but even really to ſeparate it from the Body, to *untwiſt* the Ligaments of his Frame, and by degrees to *reſolve* himſelf into the State of the Dead. And thus the *Jews* expreſs the manner of the Death of *Moſes*, calling it *Oſculum Oris Dei*, *the Kiſs of God's Mouth.* That is, that he breath'd out his Soul by the mere Strength and Energy of *Contemplation*, and expired in the Embraces of his Maker. A Happy way of Dying! How ambitious ſhould I be of ſuch a conveyance, were it practicable? How paſſionately ſhould I joyn with the Church in the Canticles? φιλησάτω με ἀπὸ φιλημάτων στόματος αὐτοῦ, *Let him Kiſs me with the Kiſſes of his Mouth.* Cant. 1 Ver. 2.

But however this be determin'd, certain it is, that there are exceeding great Meaſures of *Abſtraction* in *Contemplation*, ſo great, that ſometimes whether a Man be in the Body or out of the Body, he himſelf can hardly tell. And conſequently the Soul in theſe *Præludiums* of Death, theſe *Neighbourhoods* of Separation, muſt needs have *brighter* glimpſes, and more *Beatifick Ideas* of God, than in a ſtate void of theſe *Elevations*, and conſequently muſt love him with greater Ardency. Which is the next thing I am to conſider.

The love of God in general may be conſidered either as it is purely *intellectual*, or as it is a *Paſſion*. The firſt is, when the Soul, upon an apprehenſion of God as a good, delectable, and agreeable Object, joyns her ſelf to him by the Will. The latter is, when the motion of the Will is accompany'd with a ſenſible Commotion of the Spirits, and an eſtuation of the Blood. Some I know are of Opinion, that 'tis not poſſible for a man to be affected with this ſenſitive Love of God, which is a *Paſſion*, becauſe there is nothing in God which falls under our imagination, and *conſequently* (the imagination being the only Medium of conveyance) it cannot be propagated from the Intellectual

part

part to the Senſitive. Whereupon they affirm, that none are capable of this ſenſitive paſſionate Love of God but Chriſtians, who enjoy the *Myſtery* of the *Incarnation*, whereby they know God has condeſcended ſo far as to cloath himſelf with Fleſh, and to become like one of us. But 'tis not all the *Sophiſtry* of the *cold Logicians* that ſhall work me out of the belief of what I feel and know, and rob me of the ſweeteſt entertainment of my Life, the *Paſſionate Love of God.* Whatever ſome Men pretend, who are Strangers to all the affectionate heats of Religion, and therefore make their Philoſophy a Plea for their indevotion, and extinguiſh all Holy Ardours with a *Syllogiſm*; yet I am firmly perſuaded, that our love of God may be not only paſſionate, but even *Wonderfully* ſo, and *exceeding the Love of Women.* 'Tis an *Experimental* and therefore *undeniable* Truth, that *Paſſion* is a great Inſtrument of *Devotion*, and accordingly we find, that Men of the moſt warm and pathetick *Tempers* and *Amorous Complexions* (Provided they have but Conſideration enough withall to fix upon the right *Object*) prove the greateſt *Votaries* in *Religion.* And upon this account it is, that to heighten our Love of God in our Religi-

ous *Addreſſes*, we *endeavour* to *excite* our Paſſions by *Muſic*, which would be to as little purpoſe as the *Fanatic* thinks 'tis, if there were not ſuch a thing as the *Paſſionate Love of God*. But then as to the *Objection*, I *Anſwer* with the *excellent Deſcartes*, that although in God who is the *Object* of our *Love*, we can *imagine* nothing, yet we can *imagine* that our Love, which conſiſts in this, that we would unite our *ſelves* to the *Object* beloved, and conſider our *ſelves* as it were a part of it. And the ſole *Idea* of this very Conjunction is enough to ſtir up a heat about the Heart, and ſo kindle a very *vehement Paſſion*. To which I add, that although the *Beauty* or *Amableneſs* of God be not the ſame with that which we ſee in *Corporeal Beings*, and *conſequently* cannot *directly* fall within the *Sphere* of the imagination, yet it is ſomething *Analogous* to it, and that very *Analogy* is enough to *excite* a *Paſſion*. And this I think ſufficient to warrant my general diviſion of the Love of God into *Intellectual* and *Senſitive*.

But there is a more *peculiar Acceptation* of the *Love* of God proper to this place. And it is that which we call *Seraphic*. By which I underſtand in ſhort, that Love of God which is

is the *effect* of an intenſe *Contemplation* of him. This differs not from the other in kind, but only in *degree*, and that it does *exceedingly*, in as much as the thoughtful *Contemplative* Man (as I hinted before) has *clearer Perceptions* and *livelier Impreſſions* of the *Divine Beauty*, the lovely *Attributes* and *Perfection* of God, than he whoſe Soul is more deeply *ſet* in the *Fleſh*, and lies groveling in the *bottom* of the *Dungeon*.

That the nature of this *Seraphic Love* may be the better underſtood, I ſhall conſider how many *degrees there* may be in the *Love* of God. And I think the Computation of *Bellarmin*, *lib.* 2. *de monachis*, *cap.* 2. is *accurate* enough. He makes four. The firſt is to *love* God proportionably to *his Lovelineſs*, that is, with an *infinite Love*; and this *degree* is peculiar to God himſelf. The ſecond is to Love him, not proportionably to his *Lovelineſs*, but to the utmoſt Capacity of a *Creature*, and this *degree* is peculiar to Saints and Angels in *Heaven*. The third is to love him not proportionably to his *Lovelineſs*, nor to the utmoſt capacity of a *Creature*, abſolutely conſider'd, but to the utmoſt capacity of a *Mortal Crea-*

ture in this Life. And this (he ſays) is proper to the *Religious*. The fourth is to love him not proportionably to his *Lovelineſs*, nor to the utmoſt capacity of a *Creature*, conſider'd either abſolutely or with reſpect to this *Life*, but only ſo as to love nothing equally with him or above him. That is, not to do any thing contrary to the *Divine Love*. And this is abſolute indiſpenſable duty, leſs than which will not qualify us for the *enjoyment* of God hereafter.

Now this *Seraphic Love* which we here diſcourſe of is in the third degree: When a Man, after many *degrees* of *Abſtraction* from the *Animal* Life, many a profound and ſteddy Meditation upon the *Excellencies* of God, ſees ſuch a vaſt *Ocean* of *Beauty* and *Perfection* in him, that he loves him to the utmoſt *ſtretch* of his Power; *When he ſits under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit is ſweet to his Taſt.* Cant. 2. 3. When he *Conſecrates* and *Devotes* himſelf wholly to him, and has no Paſſion for Inferiour *Objects*. When he is raviſhed with the *delights* of his *Service*, and breaths out ſome of his Soul to him in every Prayer. When he is delighted with *Anthems* of Praiſe and Adoration more than with

Marrow

Marrow and Fatneſs, and *Feaſts* upon *Alleluiah*. When he melts in a *Calenture of Devotion*, and his *Soul breaketh out with fervent Deſire*. Pſal. 119. When the one thing he *delights* in is to converſe with God in the *Beauty* of *Holineſs*, and the one thing he *deſires to ſee him as he is in* Heaven. This is *Seraphic* Love, and this with *Contemplation* makes up that which the *Myſtic* Divines ſtile the *Unitive* way of Religion: It is called ſo becauſe it Unites us to God in the moſt *excellent manner* that we are capable of in this Life. By Union here I do not underſtand that which is *local* or *preſential*, becauſe I conſider God as *Omnipreſent*. Neither do I mean a Union of Grace (as they call it) whereby we are *reconciled* to God, or a Union of Charity, whereof it is ſaid, *he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him.* Jo. 4. 16. The firſt of theſe being as common to the inanimate things as to the moſt *Extaſi'd* Soul upon Earth. And the two laſt being common to all good men, who indeed love God, but yet want the *excellency* of *Contemplation* and the *Myſtic* Union. The Union then which I here ſpeak of, is that which is between the *Faculty* and *the Object*.

ject. Which conſiſts in ſome Habitude or Operation of one toward the *other.* The *Faculties here* are the *Underſtanding* and *Will*, *the Object* God, and the *Operations Contemplation* and *Love.* The reſult of *which* two is the *Myſtic Union.* Which, according to his *complex* Notion of it that I *have here* delivered, is thus moſt admirably repreſented by the excellent Biſhop *Taylour.* *It is* (ſays he) *a Prayer of quietneſs and ſilence, and a Meditation extraordinary, a Diſcourſe without variety, a Viſion and Intuition of Divine Excellencies, an immediate entry into an Orb of light, and a reſolution of all our Faculties into Sweetneſs, Affections, and Starings upon the Divine Beauty. And is carried on to Extaſies, Raptures, Suſpenſions, Elevations, Abſtractions and Apprehenſions beatifical.*

The great Exemplar, *pag.* 60.

I make no doubt but that many an honeſt Pious Soul arrives to the heavenly *Canaan*, who is not fed with this *Manna* in the *Wilderneſs.* But though every one muſt not expect theſe *Antepaſts* of Felicity that is vertuous, yet none elſe muſt. *Paradiſe* was never open but to a State of *Innocence.* But neither is that enough. No, this Mount of God's

God's Preſence is fenced not only from the *profane*, but alſo from the *moderately* vertuous. 'Tis the Priviledge of Angelical Diſpoſitions, and the Reward of *eminent* Piety and an excellent Religion, to be admitted to theſe *Divine Repaſts*, theſe Feaſts of *love*. And here I place the greateſt Happineſs attainable by Man in this Life, as being the neareſt Approach to the State of the Bleſſed above, the *outer Court* of Heaven.

Theſe (Sir) are my thoughts concerning Happineſs. I might have *ſpun* them out into a greater length, but I think a little Plot of ground *thick-ſown* is better than a great Field which for the moſt part of it lies Fallow. I have endeavour'd to deliver my Notions with as much Perſpicuity and in as good Method as I could, and ſo to anſwer all the ends of *Copiouſneſs*, with the advantage of a ſhorter Cut. If I appear ſingular in any of my Notions, 'tis not out of an induſtrious affectation of Novelty, but becauſe in the compoſing of this diſcourſe (the Meditation of a few broken hours in a Garden) I conſulted more my own experimental Notices of things and private *Reflections* than the Writings of others. So that if ſometimes I happen

happen to be in the Road, and ſometimes in a way by my ſelf, 'tis no wonder. I affect neither the one nor the other, but write as I think. Which as I do at other times, ſo more eſpecially when I ſubſcribe my ſelf

SIR,

Yours moſt affectionately,

All-Souls College
Apr. 18. 1683.

J. N.

A

A Letter of Reſolution concerning ſome Paſſages in the foregoing Treatiſe, to the ſame Perſon.

SIR,

THE kind Entertainment which you gave my *Idea of Happineſs*, does not only *incourage*, but *oblige* me to endeavour the ſatisfaction of that Scruple, which the Peruſal of it has occaſion'd. I cannot but highly commend your *ſearching* Curioſity, in deſiring farther ſatisfaction concerning a matter of ſo ſublime and excellent a Nature (for the Tree of Paradiſe is *good for food, pleaſant to the Eye, and a Tree to be deſired to make one wiſe*) tho you muſt give me leave to wonder that you would not *inquire* at a better *Oracle*. But ſince you are *pleas'd* to be of the Opinion, that few have made this Subject ſo *familiar* to their Meditation as I have, I cannot with any pretence decline your Requeſt, tho perhaps by my performing

ing it I ſhall work you into a contrary perſuaſion.

Sir, You ſay you ſhould like my Notion concerning the *reality* of that which is uſually call'd *Imaginary Happineſs*, that is, (as you well exp'ain both your own and my meaning) that although the *Object* may be an *Imaginary Good*, yet the *Happineſs* which conſiſts in the Fruition of that Object, will not be *Imaginary too*, but *real*, and conſequently, that 'tis impoſſible for a man to *ſeem* to himſelf to be happy, and not to *be really* ſo, all Happineſs conſiſting in *Opinion*. This Notion, you ſay, you ſhould like rarely well, could you free your ſelf from one difficulty which it engages you upon ; (*viz.*) That hereafter, in the ſtate of Glory, either one Saint ſhall think himſelf as happy as another, or not ; if not, this muſt needs occaſion Envy or Diſcontent, but if one ſhall think himſelf as happy as another, then, according to my *Hypotheſis*, that *Opinion* is the *Meaſure of Happineſs*, 'twill follow that he will really be ſo ; and this brings in *Equality* of Happineſs, which you look upon (and I think juſtly too) as another abſurdity.

I confeſs, Sir, this Argument is pretty ſubtle and ſurprizing, but I conceive the

Knots

Knots of it may be untied by this Anſwer. Firſt, it may be juſtly queſtion'd, whether the firſt part of your *Dilemma* be neceſſarily attended with the appendant abſurdity. 'Tis true indeed, not to think ones ſelf as happy as another, is the Spring of Envy or Diſcontent among Men in this World, but whether this be the *genuin* and *conſtant* effect of that Conſideration, or whether it ought not rather to be aſcribed to the preſent Infirmities and Imperfections of Human Nature, may admit Diſpute. But in caſe this abſurdity does inſeparably cleave to the firſt part, then I betake my ſelf to the latter, and affirm, that in Heaven one Saint ſhall think himſelf as happy as another. Then, according to my own Notion (*ſay you*) it will follow that he *is really* ſo. No, I deny the conſequence, the invalidity of which will plainly appear by diſtinguiſhing the ambiguity of the *Phraſe*. For this Expreſſion, *One Saint thinks himſelf as happy as another*, may be taken in a double ſenſe, either that he thinks himſelf as happy as he himſelf thinks that other, or that he thinks himſelf as happy as that other thinks himſelf. I grant, ſhould one Saint think himſelf as happy as another in this latter ſenſe of the Phraſe, he would,

accor-

according to my *Hypotheſis*, really be ſo; ſo that this would bring in equality. And therefore in this Senſe I deny the Propoſition, and that without the leaſt danger of ſplitting upon the firſt abſurdity. But for the former Senſe, *that* has no ſuch *levelling* quality, for to ſay that I think my ſelf as happy as I think another, amounts to no more than this, that in my apprehenſion another does not exceed me in Happineſs: But tho he does not in *my apprehenſion*, yet he may in *reality*, for tho my Opinion gives meaſures to my *own* Happineſs, yet it does not to *another* Mans. So that one Saint may be ſaid to think himſelf as happy as another in the former ſenſe, without equalling the Happineſs of the Bleſſed, tho, I confeſs, I ſhould much rather adhere to the contrary propoſition, (*viz.*) that *one ſhall not think himſelf as happy as another*, in caſe ſuch an Opinion be not neceſſarily attended with *Envy* or *Diſcontent*. Becauſe it ſeems unreaſonable to make them ignorant of the degrees of one anothers Bliſs, unleſs that ignorance be neceſſarily required to prevent the alledg'd abſurdities. But I *determin* nothing in this point, my buſineſs was only to break the force of your *Dilemma*, and to ſhew that my Notion does not involve you in the difficulty

ficulty ſuppoſed. This, Sir, is all that I think neceſſary to ſay to a Perſon of your apprehenſion, and therefore I end theſe nice Speculations with this profitable reflection, that altho the *Notion* of Happineſs be *intricate* and *obſcure*, yet the *means* of attaining it are *plain*, and therefore 'twould be moſt adviſable both for you and me *chiefly* to apply our ſelves to the *latter here*, and we ſhall underſtand the *former* with the beſt ſort of Knowledge, that of *Experience*, *hereafter*.

Yours

J. N.

Another Letter to the ſame Perſon, concerning the true Notion of Plato's Ideas, *and of* Platonic Love.

SIR,

WEre I not as well acquainted with your ſingular *modeſty*, as I am with your *intellectual* accompliſhments, I ſhould readily conclude, that your directing your inquiries to *me* proceeded not ſo much from a Curioſity to *improve* your *own* Knowledge, as to *try mine*. But when I conſider that you are ignorant of nothing ſo much as of your own Worth and Abilities, I begin to think it poſſible that you may propoſe theſe *Queſtions* even to *me* out of a deſire to be *inform'd*. Which way ſo ever it is, I acknowledge my ſelf to be obliged to you for affording me an opportunity of ſerving you, eſpecially in ſuch an Inſtance, where I cannot gratify your Requeſt without *humouring* my own *Genius* at the ſame time. For indeed to my apprehenſion, there

is

is not a finer or more Sublime piece of Speculation in all *Plato*'s *Philoſophy*, than that of his *Ideas* and that of his *Love*, tho it has undergon the ſame hard Fate with many other excellent *Theories*, firſt, to be either *ignorantly miſunderſtood*, or *maliciouſly miſrepreſented*, and then *popularly* vilify'd and decry'd.

To do right therefore to the name of this great Man, as well as to ſatisfy your Demands, I ſhall firſt *propoſe* the general miſtake, and then *rectify* it, firſt preſent you with the *ſuppoſ'd* Opinion of *Plato*, and then with the *true* and *genuin* one. I begin with his *Ideas*, by which 'tis taken for granted by the *generality* of Writers, eſpecially thoſe of the *Peripatetic Order*, that he underſtood *univerſal* Natures or abſtract Eſſences ſubſiſting eternally by themſelves, Separate both from the mind of God and all ſingular Beings, according to which, as ſo many *patterns*, all Singulars are form'd. As for inſtance, that a Bull, not this or that *in* particular, but a *univerſal* Bull, or a Bull in general, ſhould exiſt by it ſelf eternally, according to which all particular Bulls were made. Sir, I ſuppoſe you can hardly forbear ſmiling at the odneſs of the Conceit, but as ridiculous as you may

think it, 'tis ſaid to be maintained by no leſs a Man than *Plato*, and has been thought of that *moment* too, that *Multitudes* of great Men have ſet themſelves very *ſeriouſly* to confute it as a dangerous Hereſy, and have oppoſed it with as much *zeal* as ever St. *Auſtin* did the *Manichees* or the *Pelagians*.

But now, that this Opinion was not only for its Abſurdity and Contradictiouſneſs unworthy of the contemplative and refin'd Spirit of *Plato*; but was alſo apparently none of his, I dare ſay any capable Perſon will be convinc'd that ſhall heedfully and impartially *examin* and *compare* the Works of *Plato*; And this *Ariſtotle* himſelf muſt needs have known (he having been his conſtant Auditour for twenty years together) but only he wanted a Shadow to fight with, and ſo father'd this monſtrous Opinion upon his Maſter. And of this diſingenuity of *Ariſtotle*, together with other abuſes, *Plato* himſelf complain'd, while alive, in theſe words; Ἀριστοτέλης ἡμᾶς ἀπελάκτισε καθάπερ τὸ πῶλος τὴν μητέρα, as is recorded by *Laertius* in the Life of *Ariſtotle*.

And now, that the groſſneſs of this Abuſe may the more fully appear, I will in the next place preſent you with another Senſe of *Plato's*

to's *Ideas*, and ſuch as by a more than ordinary acquaintance with his Works, I know to be the *true* and *genuin* one. Know then that *Plato* conſidering the World as an effect of an *intellectual* Agent, and that in the Operations of all other *Artificers* or rational *Efficients* there muſt be ſome form in the Mind of the *Artificer* preſuppoſed to the Work (for otherwiſe what difference will there be between a *fortuitous* effect and an *intended* one, and how comes the effect to be of *this* Species rather than *another?*) thought it neceſſary to ſuppoſe ἀιδίνια παραδείγματα, Eternal Forms, Models or Patterns, of all the Species of being in Nature exiſting in the Mind of God. And theſe he calls *Ideas*. I ſay exiſting in the Mind of God, for there is not the leaſt Intimation in all *Plato*'s Works of any ſuch *Ideas* exiſting *ſeparately* from the Divine intellect, nor do the great Maſters of *Platonic Philoſophy*, *Plotinus*, *Porphyrius*, *Procles*, or any other that I know of make mention of any ſuch *Spectres* and *Ghoſts* of Entity. No, this Monſter was hatch'd in *Ariſtotle*'s Brain, and I believe did never enter *Plato*'s Head ſo much as in a Dream. For he is not only ſilent about it, but does in ſeveral places expreſly aſſert the contrary; Particularly in his *Timæus*, where, of ſet purpoſe, he deſcribes the

Origin of the World, he ſays that God made the World according to that Pattern or *Idea* which he had in his Mind. The ſame you will find more amply confirm'd in his *Hippias*, his *Parmenides*, and his ſixth Book of *Repub.* and many other places. And theſe *Ideas* he calls τὰ πρῶτα νοητὰ, *the firſt Intelligibles*, and τῶν ὄντων μέτρα, *the Meaſures of the things that are*, implying, that as all things were form'd according to theſe *ſpecifical* Platforms; ſo their truth muſt be meaſur'd from their Conformity to them. And in this Senſe muſt be taken that Common Axiom of the Schools, that *the Truth of a thing is its Conformity with the Divine Intellect*, for it is in no other Senſe Intelligible, as you will diſcern in the Proceſs.

But now, leſt you ſhould imagine, that this *Platonic Hypotheſis* of *Ideas* exiſting in the Divine Mind ſhould ill comport with the Simplicity of God, or claſh with that approved Doctrin of the Schools, *Nihil eſt in Deo quod non ſit deus*, (which is another cavil of the *Antiplatoniſts*) you are to underſtand that *Plato* by his *Ideas* does not mean any *real* Eſſence *diſtinct* from the Divine Eſſence, but only the Divine Eſſence it ſelf with this *Connotation*, as it is variouſly imitable or participable by created Beings, and conſequently, according to the *multifarious-*

neſs

neſs of this imitability, ſo are the *poſſibilities* of Being. Which is as fine a Notion as was ever framed by the Mind of Man, and that it is his, you will find, if you conſult his *Parmenides*. And this will ſerve to help us out with another difficulty, for whereas *Plato* makes his *Divine Ideas* not only the *exemplary* cauſes of things, but alſo (which is a conſequent to the former) the meaſure of their Truth, this may ſeem to fall in with their Opinion who make all *Truth* dependent upon the Speculative underſtanding of God, that is, that God does not underſtand a thing ſo becauſe it is ſo in its own Nature, but that a thing is therefore ſo becauſe God is *pleas'd* ſo to underſtand it. Which is an Opinion full of miſchief and abſurdity, as you may ſee compendiouſly, and yet evidently demonſtrated, in Dr. *Ruſt*'s little *Diſcourſe* of *Truth*. Now for the clearing this Difficulty, 'tis to be obſerved, that the Eſſence of God, according to *Plato*, is diſtinguiſhed into νῆς νοερᾶς and νῆς νοητὸς, the *Counterpart* whereof in Engliſh is *Conceptive* and *Exhibitive*. By the Mind of God *Exhibitive* is meant the Eſſence of God as thus or thus imitable or participable by any Creature, and this is the ſame with an *Idea*. By the Mind of God *Conceptive* is meant a reflex act of God's Underſtand-

derſtanding upon his own Eſſence as *exhibitive*, or as thus and thus imitable. Now if you conſider the Divine Underſtanding as *Conceptive* or *Speculative*, it does not *make* its Object but ſuppoſe it, (as all *Speculative* Underſtanding does) neither is the Truth of the Object to be meaſured from its Conformity with *that*, but the Truth of *that* from its Conformity with its Object. But if you conſider the Divine Underſtanding as *Exhibitive*, then its Truth does not depend upon its Conformity with the Nature of things, but on the contrary, the Truth of the Nature of things depends upon its Conformity with it. For the Divine Eſſence is not thus or thus imitable, becauſe ſuch and ſuch things are in being, but ſuch and ſuch things are in being, becauſe the Divine Eſſence is thus and thus imitable, for had not the Divine Eſſence been thus imitable, ſuch and ſuch Beings would not have been *poſſible*. And thus is *Plato* to be underſtood when he founds the Truth of things upon their Conformity with the *Divine Ideas*, and thus muſt the Schools mean too by that forementiond *Axiom* concerning *Tranſcendental Truth*, if they will ſpeak Senſe, as I noted above.

And now, Sir, from *Plato*'s Ideas thus *amiably* ſet forth, the *Tranſition* methinks is very natural

natural to *Love*. And concerning this I shall account in the same Method, first, by pointing out the popular Misapprehensions about it, and then by exhibiting a true Notion of it. *Platonick Love* is a thing in every bodies Mouth, but I find scarce any that think or speak accurately of it. The mistakes which I observe are chiefly these. Some of the grosser Understanders suppose that *Plato* by his *Love* meant παιδεραστία, the *Love* of *Males*, but the Occasion of this Conceit was from a passage in his *Convivium*, where he brings in *Aristophanes* speaking favourably that way. But he that shall from hence conclude *Plato* a *prostitute* to that vile Passion, may as well conclude a *Dramatic* Poet to be an *Atheist* or a *Whore-master*, because he represents those of that Character. But that Divine *Plato* intended nothing less than to countenance any such thing, is evident from the whole scope and purport of that *Dialogue*, and from other places where he expresly condemns it, and rejects it with great abhorrence; particularly in the first of his *de legibus*, where he calls it τὸ παρὰ φύσιν τόλμημα, *an unnatural attempt*. Others by *Platonic Love* understand the Love of *Souls*, and this indeed has something of truth

truth in it, only it is much too narrow and particular.

Others take *Platonic Love* to be a desire of imprinting any excellency, whether moral or intellectual, in the Minds of beautiful young men by Instruction, and so likewise of enjoying your own Perfections reflected from the Mind of another, mix'd *with* and recommended *by* the Beauty of the Body. According to the usual saying, *Gratior è Pulchro, &c.* And thus *Socrates* was said to love his beautiful Pupils *Phædrus* and *Alcibiades*. Others measure the Nature of *Platonic Love*, not from the *Object* (to which they suppose it indifferent) but from the *manner* of the *Act*. And according to these, that man is said to love *Platonically*, that does *Cassa delectamine amare*, love at a distance, that never designs a *close* fruition of the Object what ever it be, whether Sensual or Intellectual, but chooses to dwell in the *Suburbs*, pleasing himself with remote Prospects, and makes a *Mistriss* of his own *Desire*. And this is the receiv'd Notion, and that which People generally mean when they talk of *Platonic Love*. But this too is far enough from the right, for tho *Platonic love* does not aim at the fruition of sensual Objects, yet it designs the fruition of its own Object as much as any other Love does. That there-

therefore which distinguishes *Platonick love*, is not the *manner* of the act above-mention'd, but the peculiarity of the *Object*. And what that is must be collected from the Design of *Plato* in that *Dialogue*, where he treats purposely of it, his *Convivium*. Which is briefly to shew the manner of the Souls ascent to God by love. For *Plato* makes the Happiness of Man to consist in the Contemplation and Love of God, whom he calls the *Idea* of *Beauty*. But now because this *Idea* of *Beauty* (God) is of too sublime and refined excellency to be immediately fastned upon by our Love, he recommends to us μέθοδον ἀνόδου, *a Method of Ascent*, which is from loving the Beauty we see in Bodies, to pass on to the Love of the Beauty of the Soul, from the Beauty of the Soul to the Beauty of Vertue, and lastly from the Beauty of Vertue, ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τὸ ἐρασθὲν καὶ ἐφετόν, to the immense *Ocean of Beauty*, &c. For so have I observ'd a tender Infants Eye not enduring to gaze directly upon the too powerful Excellence of the *Meridian* Sun, chuse to entertain it self with the abatements of corrected and reflected Light, and take up with the *feebler* refreshments of lesser Beauties for a while, till at length the faculty

ty grows more confirm'd, and dares encounter the Sun in his Strength. And these are the *Steps* of the *Sanctuary*. So that *Platonic Love* is the Love of Beauty abstracted from all sensual Applications, and desire of corporal contract, as it leads us on to the Love of the first original Beauty, God; or more plainly thus, The Ascent of the Soul to the Love of the *Divine* Beauty, by the Love of *abstracted* Beauty in Bodies. This Love of abstracted Beauty in Bodies he calls Ἔρως Οὐρανίος, *Celestial Love*, in opposition to that which he calls ἐπιθυμία, which is the same with that Passion commonly signifi'd by the name of Love, (*viz.*) a desire of corporal contact arising from the sight of Beauty. This last indeed is a very vile, brutish, unmanly affection, and such as considering the vileness of our Bodies, one would think a man could never be charm'd into without the *Magic* of a *Love-potion*. But the former is an Angelical Affection, for certainly Beauty is a Divine thing; It is (as the *Platonic* Author says of Wisdom) *the pure Influence flowing from the Glory of the Almighty, and the Brightness of the Everlasting Light*: or in *Plato*'s own Words, *A Ray of God*. And therefore the Love of abstract Beauty must needs be a very gene-

generous and divine Affection. Sir, I could be more large in my account, but I consider *what* 'tis I write and to *whom*, and therefore I think it high time to remit you to your own Thoughts, some of which I hope will be, that *I am in a very* eminent degree of Friendship,

Yours

From my Study in All-Souls Colledge.

J. Norris.

FINIS.

Advertiſement of the Author.

WHEREAS it has been given out by ſeveral, and is by many ſtill believed, that a certain Book intituled *Hæc Et Hic*, was written by me, I do here publickly diſown it. And to thoſe that will not take my word for it, I have this only farther to ſay, that if they are *tolerable* Judges of Senſe, or have any thing of *taſte* in diſtinguiſhing Stiles, they will find upon Compatiſon, that there is not a Line in that Book like any *Compoſition* of mine. But if not, their good Opinion will be *over-bought* at the *Expence* of a *Poſtſcript*.

ERRATA.

PAge 29. for *decipere* read *deſipere*. Pag. 30. for *quantum* read *quantam*. Pag. 31. for *quot* read *quod*. Pag. 32. for *janique* read *jamque*. ibid. for *Corde* read *Corda*. Pag. 45. for learn'd read learn't. Pag. 46. for learn'd read learn't.

Books ſet forth by the Author of theſe Poems and Diſcourſes. viz.

1. EFFIGIES *Amoris*, or the Picture of Love unveil'd, in Engliſh, twelves.

2. A Meditation of Life and Death, out of the learned *Euſebius*, in Engliſh, octavo.

3. *Hierocles* upon the Golden Verſes of the *Pythagoreans*, in Engliſh, octavo.

4. A Tract againſt the abſolute Decree of Reprobation, Latin, octavo.